MENTORING MATTERS
A TOOLKIT FOR ORGANIZING AND OPERATING STUDENT ADVISORY PROGRAMS

MARK D. BENIGNI AND SHERYLL PETROSKY

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—SCOTT BROWN, PhD, secondary school consultant

"As a board president, I believe that Mentoring Matters is a must-have resource for any school system committed to providing their students the skills of school-based mentoring. As a high school social worker, I believe that every student needs to establish a strong connection with a positive adult role model. This book provides the actual lessons required to prepare staff to be that mentor while establishing methods that personalize the learning environment to ensure the fostering of positive relationships between students and staff."
—MARK A. HUGHES, MSW, board of education president and high school social worker

"The policy impacts of school-based mentoring are all positive when implementation is facilitated through tools like Mentoring Matters. This handbook will help guarantee eager buy-in from all educators."
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"Providing students with time for mentoring was easy, however, providing teachers with lesson plans was difficult. We have researched mentoring lesson plans to no avail. High school administrators and advisory mentors have been looking for simple, easy-to-implement lessons that provide students with topics of interest. This book will be a valuable tool for all high schools that have mentoring programs."
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—HERALD P. FINKE, district-wide positive behavior intervention support coach

"This is a tool that every teacher in every school should be using!"
—MAUREEN MORTON, nontraditional educational training program director

MARK D. BENIGNI, EdD, is the superintendent of the Meriden Public School System and a former four-term mayor of Meriden, Connecticut. He was presented with one of the ten Outstanding Young Americans Awards by the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce in 2008.

SHERYLL PETROSKY is a thirty-two-year veteran math teacher and mentor program director of the Cromwell Public School System in Cromwell, Connecticut. She is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a BA in mathematics and an MA in curriculum, supervision, and administration.
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Preface

As schools are trying to personalize the learning environment, connect with their students, and assure that every student has an adult mentor in the building, the need for school-based mentoring programs could not be greater. When creating their school districts' mentoring programs, authors Mark Benigni and Sheryll Petrosky could not find age-appropriate, current, user-friendly mentoring lessons. With limited financial and human resources, schools are searching for practical, innovative, and trial-tested resources. *Mentoring Matters* provides that.

The authors share their experiences building, implementing, and refining their mentoring programs. Sheryll Petrosky has been the Mentor Program director for the Cromwell public schools since 2006. She generates weekly lessons that are electronically distributed to all mentors in advance of the upcoming sessions. Mark Benigni has created Berlin High School's first school-based mentoring program in 2007. He has shared the program highlights and his learning experiences with other educators and school districts.

Secondary educators who are interested in starting a school-based mentoring program or in reenergizing their current efforts will benefit from this book. It provides the action plan and all the resources necessary to launch a school-based mentoring program. All of the weekly sessions necessary to run the program successfully through a full school year are included. Forty-eight 30-minute sessions are at the reader's disposal, ready for immediate implementation. All the hurdles and obstacles have been eliminated.
Introduction

As students are faced with more responsibility, greater challenges, and increased demands, the importance of getting to know them and making connections with them could not be greater. The Commonwealth Fund notes that negative feelings students have about themselves, poor relationships with family members, poor grades, hanging out with the wrong crowd, and getting in trouble at school are the five most prevalent problems faced by young people today. These problems are negatively impacting school performance, graduation rates, and postsecondary educational success. Mentoring programs are reversing this trend and changing student perspectives about school.

As schools are being asked to individualize learning experiences for all students, mentoring programs are gaining momentum and interest from educators, students, families, and caring communities. Individual Student Support Plans are being implemented in secondary schools across the country. Higher student expectations, collapsing of academic levels, increased state credit requirements, more competitive college admission standards, a greater number of students in need of support, and the advent of twenty-first-century learning skills have left secondary schools, and the students they serve, looking for creative ways to provide support and encouragement. Communities and families are counting on schools to reinforce their efforts at providing a moral compass for children. Mentoring programs facilitate those efforts.

The National Mentoring Partnership list the following youth-related problems and issues: peer pressure, substance abuse, sexuality and teenage pregnancy, child abuse and family violence, depression and suicide, nutrition and health care, social adjustment and time management, and career exploration and part time work. All of these topics are addressed in the mentoring lessons included in this book. The nation’s colleges and the business community are
looking for schools to provide students with the essential basic skills and the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment. Mentoring programs encourage and support academic excellence and create a collaborative team-learning experience in which students are comfortable sharing openly with one another and with the adult mentor.

Strong evidence supports that if students perceive that they are connected to an adult in the school and the school offers a supportive environment, students will improve their academic output and behavioral performance. The purpose of a successful mentoring program is to provide the climate for this to occur. All children should know that they have at least one adult in the school community who knows them personally. Schools have diverse staffs that can support students who present different interests and individual needs.

Schools that have implemented mentoring programs have experienced the following positive outcomes: increased contributions to the community; improved academic performance; improved attendance; fewer tardies, suspensions, and referrals; less vandalism; improved respect and tolerance toward others; and improved school climate. Mentoring programs are helping communities form successful young adults who become contributing members of society. As communities are emphasizing the importance and value of volunteerism and civic involvement, mentoring programs are fostering the concept of giving back. Students and school staff will benefit from this mentoring journey.

WHY ESTABLISH A FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAM

Formal mentoring programs help build positive school climates and provide academic and emotional support for students. School-based mentoring is a comprehensive, regularly scheduled small-group meeting time that provides students with lessons and activities that connect them with their adult mentor, fellow mentees, and their school. These experiences are part of a formal curriculum that provides students with timely topical discussion items to ensure a supportive learning environment for all students.

Three years of school results from a comprehensive public high school show that students are “connecting” with their school-based mentors. In 2007, 61 percent of students reported they connected with their mentor. In 2008, with the same students participating with their mentor from the previous year, 82 percent of students reported that they connect with their adult mentor. In 2009, the results went up to 83 percent. These data confirm the need, and support the value, of school-based mentoring programs. Be committed to the mentoring journey and within three years your school will have a mentoring program that fosters student, staff, and peer connections. Don’t be deterred by resistant staff members or unenthusiastic students. With the guidance and support of this mentoring manual any school can experience success.

Some of the most successful mentors had major reservations about implementing a mentoring or advisory program. Over time and through positive experiences with students, many of these staff members come to appreciate the value and importance of establishing mentoring programs. One well- respected veteran teacher stated, “Connections? I was going to do Connections? I am a teacher, not a connector! That is what I thought, [but] the reality was quite different. Within two months of working with them, a student in my class group came to me. [He was] upset that he was going to have a fight and he did not have an adult to turn to at home. The situation was diffused, and [now] every time the student passes by me in the hall, I always get a smile and a hey. I may not say I was surprised at the level of trust that developed [between us] in such a short period of time.” This teacher has become a mentor to students as well as to other staff members.

Another effective teacher and successful coach who questioned the need and value of school mentoring stated, “I’ve built very meaningful relationships with my Connections group. These are the type of relationships I could never build in the classroom or even on the practice field as a coach. The time allotted for Connections is an opportunity for students to unwind and focus about academics and focus on other issues that are relevant to the student at that particular time. We even take pictures and share stories during the summer via e-mail, so we are literally connected for the entire calendar year and will truly miss the Connections group when they graduate.” The good news is that another group of mentees will be ready to greet this teacher next year.

The value of mentoring has been openly expressed by appreciative students and supportive staff. One AP English teacher stated, “It is so refreshing to just spend time talking to students and getting to know them without the burden of assessment and grades attached to the relationship. It’s amazing how quickly students were willing to open up and talk about things that are really important to their lives.” This is where the real connections between mentors and mentees are fostered and nurtured. Building the relationship comes first, as improved academic performance and better behavior follow.

Other mentors expressed initial concern about mentee discomfort and lack of open communication. One teacher stated, “I really enjoy my Connections group. The kids I meet with were so nervous in the beginning of the year. The freshmen. I have watched them begin to blossom as young adults. Having time in the day to meet with kids with no academic demands is refreshing and helps keep me up to date with what is going on in the world of teenagers and it gives the kids someone safe to talk to about their problems.” This mentor...
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Three years of school results from a comprehensive public high school show that students are “connecting” with their school-based mentors. In 2007, 41 percent of students reported they connected with their mentor. In 2008, with the same students participating with their mentor from the previous year, 2 percent of students reported that they connect with their adult mentor. In 2009, the results went up to 83 percent. These data confirm the need, and support the value, of school-based mentoring programs. Be committed to the mentoring journey and within three years your school will have a mentoring program that fosters student, staff, and peer connections. Don’t be deterred by resistant staff members or unenthusiastic students. With the guidance and support of this mentoring manual any school can experience success.

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now feels more knowledgeable about technology, teen peer pressure, and the demands placed on a typical student, because of the authentic mentoring experience.

One mentor who expressed initial hesitation about the purpose of particular lesson plans stated, “I will be sad to see my Connections students graduate this year. In the past three years we have formed a family bond and look forward to seeing one another every week. No topic—school or personal—is taboo in our group; we feel free to express ourselves.” Part of a school’s mission is to empower students to feel comfortable and free to express themselves openly in and through different mediums. Mentoring provides that opportunity.

One mentor, who was viewed as an exceptional subject matter expert, was insulted that he was expected to mentor students. He stood up at a faculty meeting and claimed that this was a complete waste of his time. After three years with the same Connections group, this mentor has recently stated, “Connections has been an awesome experience for me and the kids I have had. We cannot wait to see each other. We have celebrated birthdays, getting into college, and other events. A lot of discussions about school and life in general have occurred. There has been a connection between the kids, and the kids and myself. The kids feel comfortable talking and they enjoy having a place to come to when they need assistance.” Mentoring programs have made believers out of naysayers because the positive results speak for themselves. Student learning is enhanced by mentoring partnerships.

WHAT THIS BOOK PROVIDES

This resource book provides readers with the rationale and action plan for beginning a mentoring program at their school or for supplementing their current efforts. With this mentoring manual in hand, mentors and mentees will have 48 30-minute lessons ready to be implemented. The lessons are trial-tested and ready to be shared with students. This book provides the program, from actual lessons, to the framework, to the strategies for successful implementation.

The highlight of this mentoring manual is the weekly mentoring lessons that are organized for a full academic year. These activities provide engaging instructional topics that can be implemented in schools at any time. These lessons serve as the foundation of a successful mentoring program. From Facebook to bullying to teenage stressors, this book is comprehensive in its approach. If a topic is on a teenager’s radar screen, a concern of the community, or a recurring school issue, a lesson plan to address the topic and provide support is included in this book.

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

Change is never easy. People’s natural instinct is to just say no to change. Change is essential in order to meet the academic and emotional needs of students. Teachers need to first know why mentoring matters. That is why the discussion must begin. By valuing teacher time, current traditions, and associated fears, educators can successfully implement mentoring programs. Keeping it simple eliminates those fears.

So now what? Use this book to create a school-based mentoring program for all students in your school. By placing students in a small group with a caring adult mentor, schools can help meet the needs of students. By allotting time on a weekly basis within current schedules, mentoring will have a formal place in the school week. By recognizing time constraints in hand, schoolwide initiatives and increased responsibilities, this resource book provides user-friendly mentoring sessions that are ready for immediate use. Just direct your mentees to pull out their mentoring manuals and turn to the desired lesson page. It truly is that easy!

When scheduling the time, mentor program coordinators should share the benefits of school-based mentoring with the staff, students, and families. An explanation of how this time can be effectively utilized by guidance and other advisors for special assemblies, all class meetings, and guidance activities must be understood by and shared with school staff. By utilizing mentor time for these important activities, students will rarely miss out on authentic class learning experiences.

By asking staff for open and honest input at the onset of program implementation, schools will maximize their potential to get everyone on board. Mentor staff will remain with their mentees throughout their tenure at school. Staff should be provided with an opportunity to choose their preferred grade level. Public relations efforts should include notification, explanation, documentation of success. This information should be disseminated to students, staff, parents, Board of Education members, and the community through large through school websites, mass e-mails, parent forums, student council meetings, faculty meetings, and Board of Education presentations.

When selecting mentoring groups, it is recommended that schools group students with peers who are in their same grade level. All school members can be valuable, effective mentors. Certified staff, as well as certified staff, should be utilized to keep the mentoring groups as small as possible. A nurse, hall monitor, resource paraprofessional, or secretary can be an excellent student mentor. When dividing students into their grade groups, do not divide them alphabetically. Alphabetical grouping is probably used for many other school groupings already.
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Know who is in charge. Is there a mentor coordinator or is the process administratively led? Our experiences show that mentoring programs are received better by staff when led by one of their colleagues. Providing an additional planning period and/or a small stipend is recommended for the mentoring coordinator. A mentoring coordinator is a current staff member who shares the rationale and purpose of mentoring with staff, students, and the community; creates and disseminates weekly lessons; and supervises and manages all mentoring groups. A mentor coordinator should be a current teacher who believes in the value and benefits of mentoring, has superior organizational skills, and has garnered the respect of the staff and students.

Mentors must know who the go-to person is. Someone has to be responsible and accountable for successful program implementation and active student participation. Mentoring coordinators fill this role. They are responsible for any change in mentor groups and for assigning administrators to take groups as well. By reviewing mentor groups before they are released to students and staff, potential student-to-student and student-to-staff difficulties can be avoided. Group changes should be made with great discretion and only when the mentor-mentee relationship is seen as irreparable.

**PROCESS STEPS**

Implementing lesson plans should be made mentor friendly. Having mentees utilize their personal mentoring handbook can maximize the mentoring time and facilitate further student reflection. Have students read the quotation of the day and discuss the meaning behind the words. Always leave time at the end of the session for wrap-up and roundtable discussion. Some lessons are designed for student reflection and assessment of performance. Reflection and assessment should be kept in student folders for periodic review of individual student progress. Program comprehension and an understanding of mentor roles are essential. Formal training is not required or necessary. Staff working in schools should know how to work with young people. That should be the basic expectation for any adult working with children. Building positive relationships and creating a collaborative school environment begins with the first mentoring session.

Mentoring topics should be sought from parents, staff, students, and the community at large. Some lessons are themed and should be delivered sequentially. Seasonal topics and current events may dictate topic scheduling. Lessons should be delivered weekly in order to facilitate positive, consistent connections between mentors and mentees. If a mentor is uncomfortable with a particular topic, another mentor could facilitate the lesson, the group could be combined with another mentoring group, or an alternative plan may be considered. If a topic guides a group discussion in another valuable direction, allow the students to chart the group mentoring course. Successful mentoring programs rely on the professional integrity of the mentors and the mutual respect of the mentees.

**SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS**

These lessons can easily be differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Current staff members need to be utilized effectively to support a diverse student body that has different social, emotional, and academic needs. Students with attention issues may benefit from serving in mentoring group leadership roles. Students with intellectual disabilities may benefit from lesson modeling and guided practice. The book allows students and staff to preview future lessons to make sure that all group members feel comfortable and prepared for the formal mentoring session.

By creatively scheduling mentors and mentees, schools can target to support the students who have specific needs. Students with significant disciplinary concerns can be teamed with a school administrator. Students dealing with significant emotional issues might be partnered with the school social worker’s mentoring group. The diverse talents and interests of school staff members should ensure that the individual needs of the students are properly addressed. Mentoring programs can help prepare students for success and inclusion in classes as well as in co-curricular school activities.

**STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

Make mentoring feel different than a typical classroom experience. Arrange the room differently and have students leave their book bags and learning materials to the side. This is a time to decompress and connect with other. Mentors will enjoy the experience more if they participate in the activity with their mentees, and share their own ideas and answers with the group. Mentors should keep a personal folder for each mentee that contains academic progress lessons, report cards, and other pertinent information. These folders will be a compilation of mentee progress updates and will stay with the student’s mentor until graduation. Graduating mentees will receive the folder so they can refer to the challenges overcome and the successes experienced. It is all about building positive rapport with students.

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the day and asking mentees what the quote means to them. Discussion can flourish by simply asking each mentee to share something good that happened to him or her that day. By starting each session with something positive, mentors will increase their chances of having a successful mentoring session. When mentoring sessions are not successful, mentors may need to listen more than they speak.

General mentoring rules must be consistent among groups, and shared and respected by mentors and mentees. All mentees must attend sessions and attendance should be taken. All mentees must participate in the session activities and avoid outside reading, listening to music, or completing homework assignments. One person should speak at a time, side conversations must be avoided, and gossiping and rumor spreading must not be tolerated. If there is any mention of abuse or threats to immediate safety, mentors must report it to the appropriate authorities immediately.

Mentors can develop a positive rapport with their mentees by e-mailing them to welcome them back to school, celebrating birthdays, sharing favorite foods, and creating a mentoring group e-mail distribution list. Mentees can also volunteer to facilitate the lesson plan implementation and offer topic suggestions at the conclusion of any mentoring session. Some of the most successful and engaging lessons come from student recommendations.

There are numerous methods to equitably group all mentees, and to avoid repeating the same groupings again and again. The idea is to get mentees up and moving and actually talking to each other and having fun! Once mentors have mentees lined up, mentors can divide the groups by utilizing one of the following strategies:

- Count off by the number of groups needed.
- 1, 2, 1, 2.
- To establish pairs, tell mentees to line up in front of the class. Have them count off “1, 2, 3,” up to half the number in the class, and then repeat. Match up the two number 1’s, the two number 2’s, etc.
- Tell mentees to stand up in a line based on birthdates. Then mentors can count off as they wish.
- Group them by the colors that they are wearing or their favorite colors.
- Group them by height.
- Group them by favorite sports, ice cream, music, etc.
- Line them up by number of siblings (most to least) and then decide how to split them up.
- Line them up by what they think is the ideal month for a wedding.
- Line them up by what they think is the ideal age to get married (youngest to oldest).

- Line them up by alphabetical order of middle names (A–Z).
- Line them up by the time they get up on Saturdays (earliest to latest).
- Line them up by number of cousins they have (least to most).

Don’t wait. Now is the time to implement a school mentoring program. The sessions are planned, prepared, and tested. The staff is ready, and students need the support. In order to successfully meet the needs of all students, provide students with twenty-first-century learning skills, and prepare students for postsecondary educational programs, schools must build relationships with their students and provide personalized educational programs. Mentoring programs help build relationships that improve student academic output as well as behavioral performance.

Schools with successful mentoring programs are reporting positive school climates and improved student performance. The documented benefits of school mentoring have made it imperative for schools to implement for programs. The following lessons provide weekly activities that are easy for staff to implement and enjoyable for students. The quote of the day, student discussions, and well-designed activities are ready for you to implement today. All students will benefit from adult mentors who have engaged educational, and enriching topics at their fingertips. Good luck and enjoy the journey!
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journey!
I’d Like to Get to Know You

Use what you have to run toward your best—that’s how I now live my life.

—Oprah Winfrey

Objective: To begin to get to know each other and increase everyone’s comfort level to allow for productive discussions.

Materials needed: Copies of “People Search” worksheet, one for each mentee and one for yourself.

Procedure: Explain to mentees that this is a new program for all. (Mentors should introduce the program and explain what the purpose is.) The goal is to make connections between and among students and adults in the school and the community. The mentoring concept comes from the idea that connections can be made between students and adults, between students and students, and between students, adults, and the community as a whole over time.

Today’s activity is called People Search. The directions are simple. No person can sign more than once. All are participating. (Distribute the questionnaires. Allow about twelve minutes). Come back to the group and discuss.

Discussion questions:
• Who saw a movie more than twice?
• What movie? How many times?
• Who has met someone famous?
• Who were they?
• What concerts have you attended?
Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns.
**Closure questions:**
- What is the purpose of a mentoring program?
- What was the reason for the people search?

1. Get one person to sign each square.
2. Try to use a person only once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1 People Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was born in another state:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which state:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a job:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing what:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has been to a concert:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which did you attend last:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has been rock climbing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Hello, My Name Is. . . .**

Every man I meet is in some way my superior.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Objective:** To learn the names of the people in the group so that we can begin to have personal conversations.

**Materials needed:** None.

**Procedure:** This lesson should be done early in the year. Make sure people are sitting in new places around the circle. Start the activity by mentioning that this is an introduction activity. Tell each mentee to think of something that is unique to them, and that this should be something they are willing to share with the group. As the mentor, you will start by saying “Hi, I’m (mentor name) and I (something unique to mentor).” The next person in the circle will then say, “Hi, this is (mentor name) and he or she (unique thing).” The mentee will then state his or her name and what is unique about him or her.

The next mentee in the circle will then reintroduce the mentor and the unique quality associated with him or her, the first mentee’s name and his or her unique quality, and finally introduce himself or herself and the unique quality associated with him or her. This will go on until everyone has had the chance to share. Mentees might need prompting. Let the mentees figure it out. If time allows, ask if there is anyone who would volunteer (someone who only has one or two people to introduce at the beginning) to introduce the whole group by name and unique attribute.
Beating the Bully

Bullies are always cowards at heart and may be credited with a pretty safe instinct in scenting their prey.

—Anna Julia Cooper

Objective: To recognize bullying behaviors and the serious impact they have on the victim.

Materials needed: Paper and pencils.

Procedure: Tell mentees that the data that will be shared are from the National Youth Violence Center. Ask for a volunteer and have her read the following definition.

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words, or in other ways. Note that bullying can be overt (obvious) or covert (subtle).

The following are examples of bullying behaviors. Remember, bullying is a pattern of behavior that is repeated over time against the same person(s) with a noted power differential.

• Saying hurtful and unpleasant things.
• Making fun of others.
• Using mean and hurtful nicknames.
• Completely overlooking someone.
• Deliberately excluding someone from a group of friends.
• Hitting, kicking, pulling hair, pushing, or shutting a person out.
• Telling lies about a person.
Spreading false rumors about a person.
Sending mean notes.
Trying to get other students to dislike another person.

Ask mentees to
- define what being bullied means.
- give examples of bullying actions.
- assign a percentage (from 0% to 100%) of students who have been bullied or were the bullies. Answer: Thirty percent of 9–12 graders report or admit being bullied or being the bully.
- True or False:
  - Males and females bully the same way. Answer: False.
  - Both males and females bully by making fun of someone’s looks, speech, or behaviors.
  - Males are more likely to get physical by pushing or hitting.
  - Females are more likely to spread rumors or avoid people.

Discussion questions:
- Does any of this information surprise you?
- Did you suspect that males and females bully differently? The same?
- Can you see how social networks such as Facebook could be used in a hurtful way?
- What do you think you can do as individuals?
- What can our high school do as a community to fight bullying?

Closure activity:
Have each mentee write down one way they can help practice non-bullying behaviors.

Friend Request?

Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.

—Aristotle

Objective: To set limits regarding Facebook and other social networks and increase mentee awareness of the potential dangers of these networks. This will improve decision making.

Materials needed: None.

Procedure: This will be a chance for mentees to share with mentors and vice versa. If you do not have a Facebook account, ask your mentees about it. If you do have one, you do not have to disclose this fact. Use your discretion.

Discussion questions:
- How many of you have a Facebook account?
- What is Facebook? Answer: A social network.
- How does it work? (Have mentees answer the question, and add inside you know something about it.)
- What are some common words used in Facebook? See if they add more to this basic list.
  Friend—Someone whose friendship you accept or request via the site.
  Term friend can include anyone—boss, pal, stranger, etc.
  Friend request—Notification that someone has asked for your friend. You can confirm or ignore the request. You can also remove a friend later time.
  Gift—Tiny digital e-token you can send a friend. Generally it costs $.
  Group—Collection of users based on shared interests, activities, etc.
• Spreading false rumors about a person.
• Sending mean notes.
• Trying to get other students to dislike another person.

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• What can our high school do as a community to fight bullying?

Closure activity:
Have each mentee write down one way they can help practice non-bullying behaviors.

Friend Request?

Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.

—Aristotle

Objective: To set limits regarding Facebook and other social network sites and increase mentee awareness of the potential dangers of these networks. This will improve decision making.

Materials needed: None.

Procedure: This will be a chance for mentees to share with mentors and vice versa. If you do not have a Facebook account, ask your mentees about it. If you do have one, you do not have to disclose this fact. Use your discretion.

Discussion questions:
• How many of you have a Facebook account?
• What is Facebook? Answer: A social network.
• How does it work? (Have mentees answer the question, and add insight if you know something about it.)
• What are some common words used in Facebook? See if they add more to this basic list.
  Friend—Someone whose friendship you accept or request via the site. The term friend can include anyone—boss, pal, stranger, etc.
  Friend request—Notification that someone has asked for your friendship. You can confirm or ignore the request. You can also remove a friend at a later time.
  Gift—Tiny digital e-token you can send a friend. Generally it costs $1.
  Group—Collection of users based on shared interests, activities, etc.
Friend Request?

Poke—A slightly annoying way to initiate conversation with another user. Pokes are generally not used by people under 14.

Wall—Space on every user’s profile page that allows friends to post messages for the user and every friend of the user to see.

Status Update—What you can type (160 characters maximum) at the top of your profile to let people know what you are thinking, doing, feeling, etc.

Profile—Some information about who you are.

- How does Facebook make money? Answer: The ads are tailored to the information posted on the profile or on the Facebook account. There are several lawsuits regarding this.
- Is there a guarantee of privacy on the Internet? Answer: No.
- If you delete something on Facebook, is it gone forever? Answer: No, with tools and skills, a picture you posted can be found by someone. In fact, anything you have posted can be found.
- Are Facebook accounts being used to check up on you? Answer: Yes. Recent information suggests that employers are looking at Facebook accounts to see what a prospective employee is like outside the work environment. Some college admissions people have also looked to see what prospective students might be involved in other than what their transcripts or letters of recommendation indicate. If a friend posts a comment about a health issue, that issue can follow a Facebook user for a long time.
- What are some safety features you can use to protect yourself? Have mentees generate a list of do’s and don’ts for using Facebook—for instance, be careful what you put on your profile page; use firewalls (an anti-virus protection); be aware that you are being marketed; etc.
- Should you post just any picture? Discuss the concept of being “tagged.”
- Can someone else take a picture off your Facebook page/profile? Answer: Yes, anyone can download it to his or her own computer and then use it without you knowing.
- How many of you can access your Facebook account from your phone?
- How often do you check your Facebook account from school? Have mentees guess the number of times.

If you do not know much about Facebook, please let mentees be your guide. They are aware of everything. They also probably will know if you have an account or not.

Closure questions:
- What precautions can you take when using a social network?
- Why is it important to be cautious about what you post on Facebook?

Think Before You Speak

Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one’s definition of your life; define yourself.

—Harvey Fierstein

Objective: To recognize that words can be offensive even when that is not the intent and to understand how these words affect the school community; and to see that we are all members of the same community.

Materials needed: Paper, pencil, and access to the Internet if possible.

Procedure: Begin with the following questions:
- What makes a good community? Answers: Safety, family, friends, people who like you for you, a place to feel welcome, etc.
- How would you feel if someone were trying to take this community away just because of who you are? Answers: Angry, hurt, confused, resentful of the people trying to make me feel bad, etc.
- How does name calling or using derogatory language affect a community? Answers: It makes people feel bad, makes people seem immature, creates a negative atmosphere; people do not feel safe, comfortable, or welcome; etc.

Have a mentee read the definition of name calling written below.

Name calling is using a word to link a person to a negative stereotype, idea, or symbol.

Discussion questions:
- Why do people use of derogatory language? Answers: To intimidate others, to bring them down, to make themselves look more powerful, etc.